

Orthopaedics

Ankle foot orthosis

An ankle foot orthosis (AFO) is a brace that surrounds your ankle and foot. The brace controls the range of motion in your foot and ankle and helps to align them. You need good foot and ankle alignment to balance and distribute weight when you stand and walk.

The ankle foot orthosis is prescribed for you and is intended for your use only.

Your ankle foot orthosis is designed to meet your needs. You may feel some discomfort as you adjust to the new alignment of your ankle and foot. This adjustment period usually takes from 1 to 6 weeks.

Wear time

When you're first fitted with an ankle foot orthosis, wear into it gradually. This lets you get used to wearing the ankle foot orthosis and allows your skin to build up resistance to the pressure that the brace applies.

- On the first day, only wear your ankle foot orthosis for 30 minutes. Do low to moderate activities only.
- After the first day, increase the time you wear the ankle foot orthosis by 30 minutes to 1 hour each day. Do this until you are comfortable wearing the AFO all day.
- Increase your activity level as you start to wear your ankle foot orthosis for longer



Patient Information

You may experience some general muscle aches until you get used to wearing the ankle foot orthosis.

If you experience any pain or discomfort, remove the AFO for at least 2 hours and then try again. If any pain persists, stop wearing the AFO and contact the Department.

You achieve the greatest long-term benefits of the ankle foot orthosis by wearing it every day.

Your Orthotist may recommend a different wearing routine, such as only at night or for sessions with your Physiotherapist.

Shoes

You must wear your ankle foot orthosis with a shoe at all times. Choose good shoes with proper support. Always try the shoes on with the ankle foot orthosis in place to make sure they are comfortable and fit properly.

The best type of shoes to wear with your ankle foot orthosis:

- have a closed back and toe
- comes up over the top of the foot like laced-up sport shoes
- have low heels
- have a removable liner
- have a slightly wider width to accommodate the ankle foot orthosis

Make sure your shoe is secure when wearing your ankle foot orthosis.

Wear long cotton socks which sit higher than the top of the ankle foot orthosis. This will reduce the chance of any skin irritation.

Skin care

A close-fitting orthosis may cause some redness of the skin:

- around the edges of the orthosis
- where the ankle foot orthosis is applying corrective pressures

Patient Information

Inspect your skin over bony areas and around the edges skin regularly after you're fitted with a new AFO.

Stop wearing the AFO and make an appointment with your Orthotist to have it adjusted If you:

- see a red area that does not go away within 30 minutes of removing the ankle foot orthosis
- notice a break in your skin or blisters

To make an appointment, contact the Orthotic Department directly on 024 7696 6035.

Caring for your ankle foot orthosis

Cleaning

Use an anti-bacterial soap and warm water to wipe the inside surfaces of your ankle foot orthosis. Towel dry the AFO completely before putting it back on.

Do not dry your ankle foot orthosis in direct sources of heat such as on the heater or using a hair dryer. Direct sources of heat can deform the plastic.

Straps and padding

The straps and padding may become worn and can be replaced. To arrange repairs, contact the Orthotic Department.

Plastic

Inspect the plastic regularly, checking for any cracks or areas of wear and tear. Do not attempt to repair, trim or adjust the brace yourself.

Contact the Orthotic department immediately if a problem arises.

Patient Information

Joints

Some braces may have joints at the ankle. Check the joints before you use the ankle foot orthosis for any dents or cracks. Make sure that all rivets and screws are secure.

Review

Children may need their ankle foot orthosis changed as they grow or gain weight.

If your child's AFO is not fitting appropriately or is causing problems, contact the Surgical Appliances department on 024 7696 6035.

More information

If you experience any problems or have questions about the brace, please contact your Orthotist.

If you need any more information or have any questions, please contact the Orthotic department.

Coventry

Orthotics/ Surgical Appliances Department

University Hospital Coventry

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Coventry

CV2 2DX

Telephone number: 024 7696 6035

Opening times

Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm

Friday, 8am to 4pm

Closed Bank Holidays

Patient Information

Rugby

Orthotics/ Surgical Appliances

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